

In the Claims:

Please amend claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) ~~In a system for returning a number of job candidates based on~~ A method of refining a current query specifying desired criteria for the job candidates, ~~a method of refining the query~~ in an attempt to return a number of job candidates within a given range, the method comprising:

determining whether ~~[[a]]~~ the number of job candidates matching a current query is outside the given range, wherein the determining is performed by a computer system; and

responsive to determining the number of job candidates is outside the given range, generating a proposed modification to the current query predicted to bring the number of job candidates within or closer to the given range, wherein the generating is performed by the computer system.

2. (Currently Amended) One or more computer-readable storage media having computer-executable instructions for performing ~~a method of claim 1~~ refining a current query specifying desired criteria for job candidates in an attempt to return a number of job candidates within a given range, the method comprising:

determining whether the number of job candidates matching a current query is outside the given range; and

responsive to determining the number of job candidates is outside the given range, generating a proposed modification to the current query predicted to bring the number of job candidates within or closer to the given range.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
generating a new query incorporating the proposed modification.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3 further comprising:
generating search results via the new query.

5. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein generating the proposed modification comprises ~~consulting~~ invoking a plurality of ~~sub-systems~~ match forecasting methods calls ~~[[in]] according to a defined order for invoking the method calls.~~

6. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein generating the proposed modification comprises:

identifying a component of the current query having a fully open range; and
generating the ~~[[a]]~~ proposed modification to indicate ~~indicating~~ that the fully open range be constrained.

7. (Currently amended) The method of claim 6 wherein identifying a component of the ~~criteria~~ current query comprises:

ranking skills appearing within job candidates matching the current query according to a ranking scheme; and

choosing a highly-ranked skill of the skills appearing within the job candidates matching the current query as the component of the query to be constrained ~~criteria~~.

8. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein generating the proposed modification comprises:

identifying a component of the current query having a narrowed range; and
generating ~~[[a]]~~ the proposed modification to indicate ~~indicating~~ that the component having ~~[[a]]~~ the narrowed range be relaxed.

9. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein generating the proposed modification comprises:

identifying a component not appearing in the current query as required, wherein the component is associated with at least a certain percentage of job candidates matching the current query; and

generating the proposed modification to indicate ~~a~~ ~~indicating~~ that the component not appearing in the current query as required be included in ~~[[the]]~~ a new query as required.

10. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein generating the proposed modification comprises:

identifying a component appearing in the current query as required, wherein the component is associated with a fewest number of job candidates matching the current query; and
generating the proposed modification to indicate a ~~indicating~~ that the component appearing in the current query as required not be included in ~~[[the]]~~ new query as required.

11. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein generating the proposed modification comprises:

identifying a set of skills associated with a primary role of a job requisition associated with the current query;
ranking the skills in the set; and
generating the proposed modification to indicate a ~~indicating~~ that a highest-ranked skill in the set not appearing in the current query be added to ~~[[the]]~~ a new query.

12. (Currently amended) A query modification proposing system operable in conjunction with a system for returning a number of job candidates based on a current query specifying desired criteria for the job candidates, the query modification proposing system comprising:

means for determining whether a number of job candidates matching a current query is outside a given range; and

means, responsive to determining the number of job candidates is outside the given range, and operable for generating a proposed modification to the current query predicted to bring the number of candidates within or closer to the range.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently amended) A ~~computer implemented~~ method of identifying desirable job candidates, the method comprising:

extracting one or more concepts from job candidate data of a desirable job candidate as desirable job candidate criteria, wherein the extracting is implemented by a computer and comprises invoking a plurality of criteria-determining software components, wherein each of the criteria-determining software components is adapted for independently extracting different types of concepts; and

submitting the desirable job candidate criteria for matching against other job candidates, wherein the submitting is implemented by the computer.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein the job candidate data comprises an electronic representation of at least a portion of a resume of the desirable job candidate.

19. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein the matching comprises conducting a search in an n -dimensional concept space.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~[[20]]~~ 17 wherein the software components comprise:

a component for identifying a most recent role from the job candidate data for inclusion in the criteria;

a component for identifying highest-ranked skill concepts from the job candidate data for inclusion in the criteria.

22. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~[[20]]~~ 17 wherein the software components comprise:

a component for identifying one or more companies associated with a most recent experience in the job candidate data for inclusion in the criteria;

a component for identifying one or more industries associated with a most recent experience in the job candidate data for inclusion in the criteria; and

a component for identifying a highest education level in the job candidate data for inclusion in the criteria.

23. (Original) The method of claim 17 further comprising:

before matching job candidates via the desirable job candidate criteria, removing one or more of the desirable job candidate criteria based on a prioritization of the criteria.

24. (Currently Amended) A software-based system for finding job candidates having characteristics similar to desirable job candidate data associated with a job candidate designated as desirable, the system comprising:

memory; and

a processor executing instructions from the memory to implement a plurality of subsystems for extracting search terms for constructing a query for finding job candidates having characteristics similar to the job candidate designated as desirable, wherein each of the subsystems is adapted for extracting search terms of at least one different class of search terms based on previously extracted characteristics from the desirable job candidate data; and

a query submitter for submitting the query ~~extracted characteristics~~ for matching against a plurality of job candidates via a match engine.

25. (Original) The software-based system of claim 24 wherein the subsystems comprise one or more of the following: an industry cloner, a company cloner, a skill cloner, a role cloner, and an education cloner.

26. (Currently amended) A method of processing a job requisition specifying desirable criteria for job candidates, the method comprising:

determining whether a number of job candidates matching the criteria is outside a desired range indicating a desired number of job candidates to return, wherein the determining is performed by a computer;

responsive to determining that ~~the number~~ the number of job candidates matching is outside the desired range, generating new criteria based on a software-generated proposed modification to the criteria, wherein the generating is performed by the computer; and

repeating the determining and the generating steps up to a predetermined number of times, wherein the repeating is performed by the computer.

~~iteratively repeating at least once.~~

27. (Currently Amended) One or more computer-readable storage media having computer-executable instructions for performing the a method of claim 26 processing a job requisition specifying desirable criteria for job candidates, the method comprising:

determining whether a number of job candidates matching the criteria is outside a desired range indicating a desired number of job candidates to return;

responsive to determining that the number of job candidates matching is outside the desired range, generating new criteria based on a software-generated proposed modification to the criteria; and

repeating the determining and the generating steps up to a predetermined number of times.

28. (Canceled)

29. (New) The method of claim 26, further comprising storing the software-generated proposed modification, wherein generating the new criteria based on the software-generated proposed modification to the criteria comprises excluding previously generated stored software-generated proposed modification from the new criteria.